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ACCOUNT
OF THE
TRIAL
OF THE
Letter T *alias* Y.



THE

T B I A L



THE

Y. 21119 T. 10119 I.



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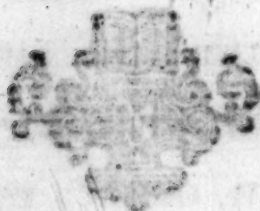
L O N D O N.
Printed for W. OWEN, at *Homer's Head*,
in *Fleet-street*, near *Temple-Bar*.

M.DCC.LIII.

AN
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Latter & alias Y.



LONDON
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PREFACE.

THE following little piece cannot require a long preface; it is published with a design to put Gentlemen of learning and leisure in mind of settling the orthography of our language. This is a matter surely worthy the attention of all who would write correctly, which every man ought to do, at least in his Mother-tongue; and therefore it cannot be reckoned either trifling or pedantic to attend to it:

it: Yet so it is, that our language is perhaps past it's highest pitch of perfection, before we have any certain rule or manner of writing it.

The French have settled their spelling; but in doing it, they by too great a regard to their pronunciation have, I think, disfigured their language, and in numberless instances lost all traces of the Etymology of their words. Sir Roger L'estrangle imitated their manner; and had his licentious way of spelling been generally followed, our English had not been now a language, but a jargon.

The two chief things hinted at in this piece are, Uniformity in spelling,

spelling, where the reasons from derivation are the same ; and, Preserving, as much as possibly may be, the marks of our Etymology ; both which I apprehend are necessary to the rendering any language fixed and easily intelligible. Modes of pronunciation may vary ; but orthography settled upon true principles will last as long as the language continues.

spelling; where the reasons from derivation are the same; and, preserving as much as possibly may be, the marks of our Etymology; both which I apprehend are necessary to the rendering any language fixed and easily intelligible. Modes of pronunciation may vary; but orthography settled upon true principles will last as long as the language continues. The words of the French, Italian, Spanish, &c. have been corrupted in our language, and have lost their original meaning; but the English, which is now the most common, has preserved its original purity, and has not been corrupted by any foreign language. The English, which is now the most common, has preserved its original purity, and has not been corrupted by any foreign language.

The two chief things to be attended to in writing, are, first, to express the meaning of the words, and secondly, to express the manner of speaking.

A N

ACCOUNT OF THE TRIAL, &c.

ONCE on a time the English Commonwealth of Letters, generally called the Alphabet, was very much disturbed that a certain Greek letter, whose real name was * Υ ψιλον, had, contrary to the libertys and privileges of the English letters,

* Wherever in this Trial the Greek character Υ occurs, it should be read Hupsilon.

B

insinua

insinuated himself into the English language, and invaded the province of an English letter, utterly excluding the said letter from several syllables, wherein he ought of right to exercise his office.

The Vowel I was the letter chiefly concerned in point of interest: he found himself wholly excluded from all jurisdiction in the end of words, and not only so, but he was frequently banished from the middle; insomuch that in Chaucer's time this fugitive Greek had usurped his power in *Wyfe, lyfe, Knyght*, and innumerable other instances, and almost thrust him out of the English language: therefore, in a convention of the letters, he declared, that he could no longer bear this foreign usurpation; and conjured them, as they

they valued the privileges of the English Alphabet, which were so notoriously violated by this γ , under the name of γ (whose example if others should follow, they had reason to apprehend the most fatal consequences from a Greek inundation) that they would join with him in a petition and remonstrance to Apollo, in order to regain his right, and have his jurisdiction settled.

The majority of the Alphabet heartily closed in with the proposal, some of them indeed from private views, and in hopes to regain some provinces which they thought invaded by other letters: the most public-spirited amongst them thought, that such a remonstrance might be very advantageous, as it would open

the way to a general reformation, and be a means to settle their respective powers, and prevent private quarrels and incroachments on one another, as well as secure them against a foreign invasion.

H was not very much inclined to have matters examined into, for fear least he should be degraded into a simple aspiration; but was at last prevailed on to join in the petition by P and T, with whom he was colleague in the government of some provinces, and who told him they were all equally in danger of being supplanted by Φ and Θ , who, as they were credibly informed, were come over incognito for that purpose.

Phil

Theta,

The

The whole Alphabet having at length agreed, some through fear, some through private pique, and others from public views, a petition was drawn up and signed by the Vowels first, and then by the Consonants according to their seniority, representing the illegal incroachments of r, alias y, upon the English privileges; and praying that Apollo would fix a day for hearing the complaint of I against the said r.

Apollo very readily granted the petition, assigned a day of hearing, and ordered r to appear; at the same time declaring, that if any other members of the Alphabet had any grievances to complain of, he would then hear and redress them.

This declaration met with different reception according to the different

ferent interests of parties ; some repented their signing the petition ; but it was too late to go back : and now the whole Alphabet were busied in preparing either to defend or enlarge their respective provinces.

When the day of hearing was come, and the Court sat, the Vowel I began in a pompous oration to shew, that notwithstanding r was in reality a Greek letter, and had no right to a place in the English Alphabet, yet he had wrongfully intruded himself into it, and did actually take on him the place and power of I in numberless instances, to the disinheriton of the said I.

“ He represented, that even in the beginning of words, where Y was frequently used, it was the real power and office of I ; that *year,*
yoke,

yoke, you, Yorke, &c. were pronounced, and ought to be written, *iear, ioke, iou, iorke, &c.*

“ As to the middle of words, he insisted, that though such incroachments had indeed been more frequent in former times, yet Y had usurped his place, and still continued to act as I in many words, as *dying, flying, denying, &c.*

“ And for the ends of words, he was totally excluded from any place there, though the power was his in *majesty, liberty*, in, what he still valued more than either, *Lady*; in short, in all other instances where Y is generally used.

“ That he apprehended it a notorious violation of English privilege, that a fugitive Greek, whose real
power

power in his own country gave not even the least umbrage for such a clame, should thus insolently take upon him the power and jurisdiction of an English Vowel ; and concluded, that he hoped Apollo would grant him justice against this intruder : and, if he did not banish him from the English Alphabet, that he would confine him to the power of U, to which he had a much juster pretense.

U was so shocked at this unexpected motion, that before he could recover himself enough to make any defense E rose up and seconded what had been said by I, beginning with scurrilous reflexions on the shape and figure of γ , which he compared to the Cross or Furca used in ancient executions ; for which being

ing reprimanded by the Court he desired that he might be appointed colleague with I to supplie the place of r in the ends of words, according to several precedents which he quoted.

U now thought it high time for him to speak, and therefore rose up, and with some precipitation represented the surprise he was under to hear an insinuation so destructive to English privilege, and so particularly injurious to himself, and that without the least ground, from a Vowel, who pretended to defend the Rights of the English Alphabet.

He pleaded, that the same place and powers which r had in the Greek language he stood fully intitled to in the English, and that therefore of right he ought to be

C possessed

possessed of the place of γ even in all Greek words anglicised, as *System*, *Hypocrite*, *Hypothesis*, and the like.

γ , alias Y, modestly urged in his defense, That they who cast such illiberal reflexions on his figure were ignorant of, or had forgot the deep mysterys which Pythagoras tells them are represented by it; that Custom the great Arbiter of languages had established him in those rights and privileges which he enjoyed; and though formerly they were much larger, yet when Custom abridged him of that extent of sway which he possessed in Chaucer's time who was the great reformer and refiner of the English language, though then he might have pleaded possession time out of mind, yet he submitted without repining.

That

That he could not but wonder at the ingratitude of the English Alphabet, in shewing so much spleen against the Greeks from whom they derive their being, nay without whose assistance they have not so much as a name, except one coined by old nurses and borrowed by them from the * superstition of Popery.

That whatever might be determined as to his power and place in words properly English, he thought he had an indisputable right to keep his place in all Greek words anglicised, since though it might not be agreeable to the English pride, it was highly consonant to reason that such words should bear the character of the language from whence they are derived.

* The Christ's-cross-row.

Apollo after having heard all sides
 gave his determination to this effect.
 "That the jealousy which the Eng-
 "lish Alphabet, and I in particular,
 "had shewn against Y proceeded in-
 "deed from a laudable motive, a
 "concern for their libertys, but
 "seemed in reality entirely ground-
 "less, for that Y in all the instances
 "given by I had not usurped his
 "power, but was indeed only a de-
 "puty to, or more properly a differ-
 "ent character of I, the power re-
 "maining wholly his; that particu-
 "larly in *dying*, *flying*, and the par-
 "ticiples of all verbs ending in IE,
 "Y was put there only as a repre-
 "sentative of IE, to prevent the un-
 "sightly cluster of vowels which
 "would be huddled together in *die-*
 "*ing*, *flying*, &c."

There-

Therefore to prevent future disputes between the said partys he Ordained,

“ That Y be never admitted into
 “ the middle of English words, ex-
 “ cept in such participles as aforesaid
 “ where he represents IE; provided
 “ nevertheless that he always exer-
 “ cise his power of Y in Greek words
 “ made English, as *Style, System,*
 “ *Hypocrite, Hypothesis, &c.*”

“ That he act as a different cha-
 “ racter of I in *Boke, Fear, Forke,*
 “ and such like words.

“ And that he stand as the repre-
 “ sentative of I or IE wherever they
 “ end a word, except in mono-
 “ syllables where there is no other
 “ vowel, as *die, tie, lie, &c.*”

This

This matter being thus adjudged and determined, several Petitions and Remonstrances were presented from other members of the Alphabet.

The Cross-petitions of D, and TH, each side complaining that the other had wrongfully taken his place in the word *Murder* or *Murthber*.

Referred to a Committee of Anglo-Saxons to determine the rights of each Complainant; and in the mean time the Poets had liberty given them to use either, as would best suit their rhyme.

The Petition of UGH to be restored to the end of the words *Tho*, and *Thro*,

The prayer of this petition granted; and a Censure was passed upon
" Sir

“ Sir Roger L’estrage, who in a
 “ foolish imitation of the French lin-
 “ troduced their new-fangled way
 “ of leaving out such letters as are
 “ not pronounced, whereby the lan-
 “ guage is maimed and disfigured,
 “ and the Etymology of words in
 “ danger of being lost.”

The complaint of I against E, for
 usurping his place in the words *in-*
title, intire, &c.

Partly allowed to be just ; and
 accordingly “ E was ordered to quit
 “ all pretensions to the beginning of
 “ words compounded of the prepo-
 “ sition IN ; but as to *Entire*, I was
 “ desired to take notice that it being
 “ derived immediately from the
 “ French *entier*, his clame to that
 “ was not so well grounded.”

The

The Petition of S to be restored to his place in *Defence*, *Pretence*, &c. (words derived from the Supines of Latin Verbs ending in DO) which the Letter C had unreasonably taken from him.

Granted.

The complaint of O against U for intruding into the words *Honour*, *Labour*, *Superiour*, *Governour*, and the like.

“ The Judge discharged U with
 “ a reprimand from the final syllable
 “ of all words derived from the Latines ending in OR ; but as for
 “ *Governer*, he said they neither of
 “ them had any thing to do there,
 “ it being an English Substantive
 “ formed immediately from the Verb
 “ *Govern*,

Govern; and therefore he assigned that province to E, and ordered him “to take possession both in that and “all such words.”

The Complaint of E against A, for intruding into the Adjective *Lest*.

E to make good his sole clame to that word had brought into Court the opinion of the celebrated Dr. Wallis, express in point, that *Lest* being a contraction of *Lessest* ought to be spelled without an A, and that the Conjunction might for distinction sake be written with one.

Apollo, after he had read it, declared that “He could not make a “juster Decree, and immediately “ordered A to quit his place in the “Adjective, and enter into the Con- “junction.”

D

Another

Another Complaint of E against A, for thrusting himself into the words *Extream*, and *supream*.

“ Apollo banished A, and gave E
“ a double power in *Extreme*, *su-*
“ *preme*, &c.”

A Petition from the Letter N, praying that G might be excluded from the words *Foreign* and *sovereign*.

Upon hearing this Petition read A immediately joined in it, and begged that both E and I might be banished from those words, and himself admitted in their room. For the latter word he brought the Authority of Milton, who spells it *sovræn*, and insisted that the other being derived from the Latin *Foraneus* he had the same equitable clame to it.

G on the other side maintained that both words were originally formed from *Regnum*; *super regnum*, and *foris regno*; and therefore if any of the Letters should be banished it ought to be I.

“Apollo said he had a very great
 “respect for the Authority of his
 “beloved son Milton, and would take
 “time to consider the case; in the
 “mean while people should be at li-
 “berty to spell those words which way
 “they liked best.”

When A heard the great opinion that Apollo had of Milton, he pulled out a Petition to be relieved against the incroachment of I, who had forced himself into *Parliament* contrary to the Authority of Milton, who always writes it *Parlament*:

But he was prevailed upon to withdraw his Petition by his adversary, who whispered him that he had better not move that matter for fear least they should be both banished, and the Province assigned to E, who in truth had a better right to it than either. However before he sat down he put in a complaint against U for wrongfully driving him out of the word *Farther* without the least pretense of reason or custom to support his clame.

U being called upon to defend himself said, that it was but a very little while that he had taken possession of that word; that he did it upon the Authority of some celebrated modern Authors, and he hoped their Authority would be allowed by the Court.

“ I will never, said Apollo with
 “ some indignation, allow of the
 “ Authority of men who write before
 “ they can spell. If you have no
 “ clame to the positive *For*, what pre-
 “ tence can you have to the compa-
 “ rative *Farther*?”

A Remonstrance from TH, repre-
 senting that S had usurped his place
 in the end of the third person singular
 of verbs.

Apollo declared “ that he thought
 “ this a very great irregularity, as it
 “ addeth very much to that hissing
 “ which is so much complained of
 “ in the language by foreiners; that
 “ he wished Custom would entirely
 “ abrogate it; in the mean time he
 “ ordered TH to keep possession in
 “ all Prayers and solemn acts of
 “ Worship,

Worship, and censured those
 young Divines who notwithstanding
 Mr. Addison's reproof will
 continue to read *pardons* and *ab-*
solves instead of *pardoneth* and *ab-*
solveth.

The Petition of E, shewing that
 I had unreasonably thrust himself in-
 to several English words derived from
Clamo, valeo, &c. and praying that
 the said I might be discharged, and
 that he the said E might be added, at
 the end of such words; so that those
 which are now absurdly written
Claim, Prevail, &c. may hereafter be
 spelled, *Glame, Prevale, &c.* He ur-
 ged that I was already dismissed from
Proclamation, Prevalent, &c. and that
 there was the same reason for what
 he desired.

Granted.

A Complaint of ED against T
for justling them out of the ends of
Verbs of the preterperfect Tense,
and of Participles.

The Court had sat late, and
therefore referred this petition to an-
ther Day, and adjourned.

F I N I S.

[3]

A Complaint of ED against T
for juggling them out of the ends of
Verbs of the preterperfect Tense
and of Participles.

The Court had sat late, and
therefore recessed this petition to an-
other Day, and adjourned.



1713